besides creating greater opportunities for gainful employment in rural and backward areas especially women and to improve productivity and quality at all level of production processes starting from leaf production to fabrics, evolving new Bivoltine Breeds with assistance from Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), development of New varieties of mulberry plants with higher yields, development of improved devices, new machines & equipments for improving silk quality and productivity, trade necessary efforts to import and popularize the Automatic Silk Reeling Machines for improvement of the quality of silk yarn, introduction of motorized silk reeling/spinning machines & setting up of common facility centers, establishment of Silk Conditioning and Testing Houses etc.

In addition to these, a separate Project "Quality Certification System for Silk" to ensure quality maintenance at different level of production process (silkworm seed, cocoon and raw Silk production) for production of quality silk of international standard to compete in Global Markets has been made. As a part of this project, a scheme "Silk Mark" is launched through the Silk Mark Organisation of India (SMOI) under Central Silk Board for the products made from pure natural silk and guarantees the purity of silk products. It also plays an important role in brand promotion of Indian silk in deomestic and Export markets. Improving Research and Development and the effective transfer of technology at all stages, encouraging clustering of activities of reeling & weaving and strengthening of linkages between the producers and industry and making amendment to the Central Silk Board Act [CSB (Amendment) Act 2006] to bring in quality norms in silkworm seed production to ensure improvement in silk productivity and quality are some other important measures taken by the Government of India.

Guaranteed employment to the weavers

3227. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is planning to implement the proposal of linking guaranteed employment to the weavers for a certain number of days in the existing policy framwork so as to meet the genuine employment demands of the weavers from rural areas.

(b) if so, how many weavers from Andhra Pradesh are expected to avail the benefit of above measures;

(c) when would the scheme commence and what would be the tentative financial outlay; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) (a) No such proposal is under consideration of Government of India.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) Handloom weaving is predominantly a household activity. Almost entire activities in the handloom sector are being done by the family members themselves and no labourers are engaged from outside. However, in order to sustain the employment of weavers in handloom Sector, Government of India is implementing five schemes during the Eleventh Five Year Plan such as (i) Integrated Handloom Development Scheme, (ii) Marketing and Export Promotion Scheme, (iii) Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme,

(iv) Mill Gate Price Scheme, and (v) Diversified Handloom Development Scheme to enhance production, productivity and efficiency of the handloom sector and to raise the income and socio-economic status of the weavers.

Sick textile mills

†3228. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether many textile mills have been lying sick for more than last five years;

(b) if so, the details of performance of these sick mills, mill-wise;

(c) the steps taken to run these mills smoothly and to improve their status by modernization during last five years and details of funds allocated for this purpose; and

(d) the details of proposed/finalized action plan to run these sick units smoothly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Under the Ministry of Textiles, two Public Sector Undertakings, i.e. National Textile Corporation (NTC) and British India Corporation (BIC) have textuke mills, which have been lying sick for more than last five years.

(b) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of House.

Diluting/repealing compulsory jute packaging for foodgrains

3229. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of Gujarat has represented in May, 2006 to dilute/repeal the provisions of compulsory jute packaging for foodgrains and sugar beyond 30th June, 2006 to project palstic women sick industries and also to check the import of jute bags from neighbouring countries;

(b) whether 14th Standing Advisory Committee had recommended reservation of 75 per cent for foodgrain and 20 percent for sugar under the Jute Packaging Materials (JPM) Act, 1987 for the jute year 2006-07; and

(c) if so, the reasons for not accepting the recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) No formal representation from Government of Gujarat in May 2006 is pending consideration by Ministry of Textiles.

(b) No, Sir. The 14th Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) had recommended the following levels of reservation for the commodities mentioned against their names for the jute year 2006-07 (July-June).

Foodgrains	: 75%
Sugar	: 70%

(c) While deciding the quantum of reservation, as per the provision of Section 4(2) of Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory use in Packing Commodities) Act, 1987, the Government considers various factors like recommendations of SAC, supply and demand

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi